



Choosing a Career

Making the choices that are right for you

A first step in deciding what to do after high school is to talk with your school counselor or a teacher for advice. Ask your counselor about taking an aptitude test or interest inventory to find your strengths, weaknesses and interests to discover potential career choices that are right for you. You can access a free self-assessment at www.studentaid.ed.gov (click on "Preparing").

1. Learn about yourself.

- **Values**—What is important to you?
- **Interests**—What appeals to you?
- **Aptitude**—What are you good at?

2. Talk to people.

Once you've narrowed your career choices, talk to people who are working in that field or, if possible, find a parttime job in that field. It's helpful to ask questions such as, "What's good and bad about this job?" and "How did you learn your trade?" There are many sources of career and job outlook information available—go to your school library, public library, or school counselor.

3. Consider how much training you will need for the career you're interested in.

- **High school diploma:** cashier, receptionist, salesperson, security guard, telephone operator, waiter/waitress
- **Special career training:** auto technician, beautician, machinist, medical technician, police officer, computer operator, commercial artist
- **College degree:** accountant, counselor, engineer, nurse, pilot, teacher, public relations specialist
- **Graduate degree:** college professor, doctor, dentist, lawyer, veterinarian, research scientist, architect

For information about specific careers, see the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* at www.bls.gov/oco or in a library. For information about financial aid for college or career school, see www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov